

### "Politics" Opposed

Objections to medical service administered by government was that it would develop "political doctors" and that the spirit and initiative of the medical profession would be impaired.

Doctor Sleyster also stated that medical costs often are needlessly excessive, because people demand so much, and that this tendency has helped promote the notion that all medical service costs too much.

"You know we have become rather spoiled as a people; everybody demands the best, and as much as possible of that," he said. "The best way for the average American family to keep the cost of sickness down is to consult the family doctor. Notwithstanding the rise of specialists, he remains the backbone of the medical profession. He is a good man, a neighbor, and he can tell what should be done. He will not incur extra expense for the family unless it is absolutely necessary."

### Help Spread False Idea

Yet there are some people—and a great many of them can afford it—who demand all the tests and treatments modern medical science has evolved; even those who shop around from office to office. These well-to-do hypochondriacs have helped spread the idea that medical service costs too much, he said.

But it was true, said Doctor Sleyster, that use, when necessary, of x-rays and other scientific equipment and hospitalization did make sickness an economic hardship for many families in low-income groups, and for their benefit the medical profession was eager to work out plans whereby costs could be minimized.

Doctor Sleyster was, however, indignant at "propaganda" being disseminated against the medical profession as now constituted by proponents of compulsory health insurance, socialized medicine and kindred plans.

"The charge of propagandists that last year 40,000,000 Americans had to go without medical care because they had no money is utterly ridiculous," said Doctor Sleyster. He was particularly hurt by it not only because the figure was absurd, but because no account was taken of the millions of hours of time and service contributed, free, by doctors in every community, to poor.

### Cites Low Death Rate

"The absurdity of such propaganda may be judged," he continued, "by the fact that the statistics of two great health fact-finding bodies, the United States Public Health Service and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, showed that the year 1938, in the United States, showed the lowest incidence of sickness in the whole history of any nation; also the lowest death rate. Moreover, the average death rate of sixty-two years showed the biggest step yet in advancing man's span of life."

Doctor Sleyster admitted that it was ironical that the sciences of medicine and sanitation had made human beings live longer, only to have them pose a new economic problem. "We have so much agitation over old-age pensions because we have so many more old people than we used to have," he remarked.

### To Speak to Doctors

The new leader of the medical association is scheduled to talk before the Los Angeles County Medical Association on March 15. His topic will be "Socialized Medicine."—Pasadena *Star-News*, March 1.

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### Would Change System of County Hospitalization

County hospitals in California should be opened up to all classes of citizens, Mrs. T. N. Price, state chairman of the Farm Home Department of the Farm Bureaus, informed the directors of the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau in session Saturday.

Seeking the enactment of legislation affecting hospitals and state medicine, Mrs. Sims said the Farm Bureaus of the state wanted the county hospitals open to indigents who cannot pay, to citizens who can partially pay, to citizens who can totally pay. Mrs. Sims said the Farm Bureaus also wanted full-time superintendents to be appointed to devote all their time and attention to the hospital and not engage in private practice. These superintendents, she said, should either be under the direction of the county boards of supervisors or county welfare boards. Patients, she explained, should, however, be able to select their own favorite physicians to treat them in the county hospitals.

Mrs. Sims also said the Farm Bureaus were interested in the compulsory health insurance proposals, specifically one that provides for cash benefits as well as hospitalization.—San Luis Obispo *Independent*, March 3.

## LETTERS

### Subject: Hospital facilities in the United States.\*

(COPY)

Chicago, Illinois, March 16, 1939.

*To the Editor:*—There are 1,272 counties without general hospitals registered by the American Medical Association. Of these 1,272 counties, approximately 250 have general hospitals not registered by the A. M. A.

Of the 1,196 counties without a registered hospital of any variety, 659 counties are entirely within a radius of thirty miles of a registered general hospital in neighboring counties.

There are only twenty-seven counties no part of which is within thirty miles of a registered general hospital. The population of these counties is 181,484.

Five hundred and ten counties lie in part within and in part without a circle of a thirty-mile radius surrounding existing registered general hospital facilities. Assuming that the population of these 510 counties is, on the average, half within and half without the thirty-mile radius, we have 2,691,288. Adding to this the 181,484 in the twenty-seven counties previously mentioned, we have 2,872,712 persons, or 2.2 per cent of the total population of the United States living more than thirty miles from a registered hospital.

In a like manner, in California the counties of Alpine, Mono and Lake, without a registered hospital within their borders, have approximately 4,500 persons more than thirty miles from a registered hospital.

We are assembling further material and shall forward it as soon as it is ready. Also, for your further information, I am enclosing a copy of "The Health of Forty Million People."

535 North Dearborn Street.

Sincerely yours,

R. G. LELAND, M. D.,  
Director, Bureau of Medical Economics.

### Subject: Foreign medical school graduates in California.

DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND VOCATIONAL  
STANDARDS

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

San Francisco, California,

March 11, 1939.

*To the Editor:*—Enclosed please find Attorney-General's Opinion NS-1508, dated March 9, 1939, re foreign medical school graduates, which we think will be of interest to readers of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

With kindest personal regards, believe me

Very truly yours,

C. B. PINKHAM, M. D.,  
Secretary-Treasurer.

(COPY)

San Francisco, March 9, 1939.

Charles B. Pinkham, M.D.  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Board of Medical Examiners  
515 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, California  
Dear Sir:

In your communication of December 27, 1938, you refer to an applicant for medical licensure who, you state, graduated from Frederick-Wilhelm University in Berlin, Germany, June 6, 1919, and who filed, on February 1, 1938,

\* In reply to a letter from the Editor.